

REMARKS

The application has been reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated July 15, 2005. Claims 139-165 are pending, with claims 1-138 having previously been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. By this Amendment, claims 157, 158 and 161 have been amended by rewriting the claims into independent form, and claims 139, 154 and 165 have been amended to clarify the claimed invention. Accordingly, claims 139-165 are presented for reconsideration, with claims 139, 154, 157, 158, 161 and 165 being in independent form.

Claims 139, 141, 148-153 and 165 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 08-292636 (Oishi) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,740,507 to Ichikawa et al. Claim 140 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Oishi in view of Ichikawa and further in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. JP 03-241372 (Kitajima). Claims 142-147 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Oishi in view of Ichikawa and further in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 06-175490 (Yabaneta). Claims 154-156 and 164 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Kitajima in view of Ichikawa.

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments and the cited art, and respectfully submits that independent claims 139, 154 and 165 as amended are patentable over the cited art, for at least the following reasons.

The present application relates to toner containers which employ a blow system for toner replenishment. For example, a blow system can comprise an air pump, a nozzle including an air inlet and a toner outlet, a toner conduit and an air conduit. A toner container, such as recited in independent claims 139, 154 and 165 of the present application, is configured to operate with such a blow system and includes a mating portion for allowing the toner container to mate with the air inlet and toner outlet of the nozzle of the blow system. When the nozzle of the blow

system is inserted into the toner container, toner has a tendency to settle near the toner outlet of the nozzle and such toner has a tendency to cohere. The mating portion maintains the engaged condition of the toner container and the nozzle, and allows the blow system to properly deliver air into the toner container to drive toner out of the toner container, by preventing a leakage of air. Further, the configuration of the mating portion coupling the nozzle to the toner container fluidizes toner near the toner outlet of the nozzle and prevents the toner near the toner outlet from stopping the toner outlet.

Oishi, as understood by Applicant, is directed to a toner container with a toner supply mechanism which comprises a shutter. When the toner container is placed in an inverted, upright position, the shutter is pulled to allow toner to be drawn out of the container, and at the same time the shutter opens an air vent at an upper part of the container which allows air to be released.

However, Oishi does not teach or suggest a toner container which is configured for operation with a blow system, such as including a mating portion which allows the toner container to mate with an air inlet and a toner outlet of a nozzle of the blow system, as provided by independent claims 139, 154 and 165 of the present application.

Ichikawa, as understood by Applicant, is directed to a toner container which allows dense packing of toner in the container. Although Ichikawa mentions conventional packing techniques which only permit low packing density, for example, in a range of 0.30 to 0.36 g/c³, Ichikawa indicates that a high packing density is desired.

Further, the toner container of Ichikawa has an open top. Such a toner container is not suitable for use in an office environment since the toner container of Ichikawa allows toner to fly about via the open top. Further, the toner container is configured such that if toner is blown upward, the toner descending thereafter has a tendency to obstruct efficient discharge.

Neither Oishi nor Ichikawa teaches or suggests a toner container which is configured for

operation with a blow system, such as including a mating portion which allows the toner container to mate with an air inlet and a toner outlet of a nozzle of the blow system, as provided by independent claims 139, 154 and 165 of the present application.

Kitajima, as understood by Applicant, is directed to a toner container with a flexible housing. The toner container is placed in an inverted, upright position, to allow toner to discharge out of the container. After toner replenishment is complete, the toner container is folded to stop toner flow.

Kitajima does not teach or suggest, however, a toner container which is configured for operation with a blow system, such as including a mating portion which allows the toner container to mate with an air inlet and a toner outlet of a nozzle of the blow system, as provided by independent claims 139, 154 and 165 of the present application.

Yabaneta, as understood by Applicant, is directed to a toner replenishment system which includes a suction device for drawing toner out of a toner container into a hopper.

However, Yabaneta teaches that a nozzle is inserted into the toner container in a position in an upper portion of a toner container in which toner is absent. Such a configuration fails to loosen cohered toner even when air is sent via the nozzle, but rather the air has a tendency to pack the toner and cause the toner to cohere.

Applicant simply does not find disclosure or suggestion in the cited art of a toner container which is configured for operation with a blow system, such as including a mating portion which allows the toner container to mate with an air inlet and a toner outlet of a nozzle of the blow system, as provided by independent claims 139, 154 and 165 of the present application.

Accordingly, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 139, 154 and 165, and the claims depending therefrom, are patentable over the cited art.

The Office Action stated that claims 157-163 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

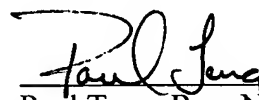
By this Amendment, claims 157, 158 and 161 have been amended by rewriting the claims into independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 159 and 160 depend from claim 158, and claims 162 and 163 depend from claim 161.

In view of the amendments to the claims and remarks hereinabove, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant earnestly solicits the allowance of the application.

If a petition for an extension of time is required to make this response timely, this paper should be considered to be such a petition. The Office is hereby authorized to charge any fees that may be required in connection with this amendment and to credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account No. 03-3125.

If a telephone interview could advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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